

Field Report

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Degree Course: Doctoral Studies, Computer Science

Host Institution: University of Pittsburgh

Supervisor: Prof. Peter Brusilovsky

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I conducted my research stay at the School of Information Sciences of the University of Pittsburgh. My advisor, Profesor Peter Brusilovsky, is a renowned researcher with vast experience in areas such as technology-assisted learning, hypermedia, information access and recommender systems. Beyond his credentials, the most valuable aspect of working under his supervision is his full dedication to nurturing his students' individual and collaborative research skills. I appreciate out weekly meetings and the interest he showed in my ideas.

During my stay I sat at the Personalized Adaptive Web Systems (PAWS) Lab, along with other 6 PhD students, all of them coming from different countries and backgrounds. The group was very welcoming and eager to exchange knowledge and ideas. Besides the work presented in the research report, we collaborated in two side projects that are still running.

Overall, my experience was very positive. Beyond the invaluable mentoring I received and fruitful collaboration with peers, it is important to highlight the human factor. Fellow students and supporting staff made my stay comfortable. In particular, Ms. Sharon Bindas (sbindas@pitt.edu) was more than helpful with all bureaucratic matters and should be the contact person for future visiting scholars.

My advice for the next Marshall Plan students is to keep focus and try to find the right balance in how invest their time. Although the student has to develop their proposed research, it is even more important to be flexible enough to work on new ideas that will arise during the stay. A period of 3 to 6 months might seem a long time in the beginning but in the end it could be insufficient to produce high-quality research. Choosing a supervisor that has the time to help the student advance with their research plan and also offers opportunities for collaboration with the local group is crucial.

For those students coming to Pittsburgh, they should take advantage of the great environment for networking and to attend as many scientific events as possible. Pittsburgh is home of at least five universities, including the prestigious Carnegie Mellon University, which is located in the proximity of Pitt's campus. University schools and institutes host several talks and gathering per week, with distinguished guest lecturers from both, top universities and companies, such as Google or Amazon.